

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, Members of the Commerce Committee,
For the record my name is Ken Wesler representing The Stamford Center for the Arts and I am
here to testify in support of **HB 5554 AN ACT CONCERNING TAX CREDITS AND
INCENTIVES FOR LIVE THEATER AND THE PERFORMING ARTS INDUSTRY.**

Like many non-profits, The Stamford Center for the Arts has been severely impacted by the
constricting economy. Over the past several years, as state funding has decreased, our budget
has been dramatically cut, including substantial layoffs in critical areas.

Therefore, in order to return to fiscal stability, we must look to leveraging our existing assets to
realize new income streams.

This bill creates a significant incentive for commercial theatre producers to mount productions in
Connecticut, from the building of the physical production, sets, props, costumes etc., to the
rehearsal process prior to a Broadway or off-Broadway run, or national tour.

As a result, Connecticut will be able to share in the commercial theatre industry, which has a
national economic impact estimated as being \$3.25 billion.

We have been given a preview of the extraordinary impact HB5554 could have on The Stamford
Center for the Arts. This past summer, as a result of the film tax credit, The Walt Disney
Company booked both our theatres for one week. As a result, The Stamford Center for the Arts
realized over \$23,000 in rental income, and perhaps even more important, our stage hands
received over 1,000 man hours, which resulted in over \$40,000 in wages.

That was the impact of just one week.

Consider the potential impact if our two theatres were rented for just twelve summer weeks.
Theatrical productions would likely employ even more stage hands. As a model, if we take the
same data as the Disney film shoot, the economic impact to The Stamford Center for the Arts
would be \$276,000 per year. If we assume a fifty percent increase in the number of workers
required, then HB5554 would create 18,000 man hours, and \$720,000 in wages.

That is an economic impact of just under \$1 million for one performing arts organization, in one
summer. This revenue would come at times that we are not presenting shows ourselves, and
would increase our rental income without jeopardizing existing revenues.

In addition, any activity which contributes to the necessary critical mass of artists, artisans and
craftspeople will serve both the film and theatre industries, create well paying meaningful jobs,
and increase economic activity for all suppliers of goods and services, not only oriented to the
arts, but also at hotels, restaurants, and even non arts oriented retail.

To summarize, an ancient Chinese proverb observes that if you give a man a fish he eats for a
day, but if you teach a man to fish, he eats for a lifetime.

HB5554 helps us to help ourselves, and ensures that we can eat for a lifetime.